

Subject: Checks & Balances: Government Finance -- Part Science, Part Art
From: "L.A. City Controller Ron Galperin" <controller.galperin@lacity.org>
Date: 06/02/2017 02:40 PM
To: Darin French <darin@lani.org>

An email from Los Angeles City Controller Ron Galperin
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Mastering the Art of Budgeting

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\$9.2 billion. That's what the City of L.A. will be spending in the new budget year that begins July 1. While that sounds like a lot of money – and it is – most of the budget was pretty much predetermined by ongoing obligations for core services, leaving a much slimmer budget for what you might call discretionary spending. The coming year's spending will be robust 5% over the year that's ending – in large part because voters approved new taxes and bonds for transportation and housing for the homeless.

There's only so much voters will want to tax themselves in the future – and every city needs to balance the need for revenues with the cumulative burden imposed by additional taxes on real estate and retail sales, as well as general obligation bond debt. That's why I'm recommending the City look at how we could also enhance revenues from emerging sectors of our economy such as short-term rentals, like Airbnb, newly legalized recreational marijuana and, possibly, digital billboards. Most crucially, my job will be to see that whatever money the City does collect is put to timely and good use.

Budgeting in many ways is both an art and a science. Click here to learn more about L.A.'s budget – and where your money goes: <http://cafr.controlpanel.la/>
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Resisting the Art of the (Raw) Deal

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The White House's recently unveiled federal budget proposal is in many ways reflective of

the philosophy espoused in the President's 1987 book: "The Art of the Deal." For cities such as L.A., the proposed budget might more aptly be described as a raw deal.

We face the specter of significant cuts to Medicaid and funding for children's health programs, elimination of federal funding for an early warning system for earthquakes and fewer dollars for housing, roads and other things Angelenos rely on. All told, my office's so-called Single Audit Report identified \$1.7 billion in federal grant money we in L.A. spent in the last full fiscal year.

Taxpayers in California and L.A. already send substantially more tax dollars to Washington than we get back. And with our state and our City a major contributor to the nation's economy, shortchanging our region would be very shortsighted. Add to that the truly national interest in helping to support L.A.'s port security and cybercrime prevention. That's the message we're sending to Washington -- as we fight for our fair share -- and a fair deal.

Employing the Art and Science of Data

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Teamwork: Joined by professionals from L.A. in Denver.

What, you may be wondering, brings 4,500 government finance professionals across the globe together? Besides a love of numbers, it's the annual conference of the Government Finance Officers Association -- which I had the privilege of addressing last week in Denver.

The gathering included accountants, auditors, treasurers and others from across the nation and from many countries -- including Sweden, Israel, South Africa and Republic of Georgia. We also had a contingent of our office's finest personnel. I shared my passion and my perspective on how data and analytics can help transform local government -- and our work in L.A. to create transparency and employ data to help inform policy decisions. It's both an art and a science.

The conference was a chance to share -- and to learn from what others are doing. It's my goal to stay at the cutting edge of tech and to make sure we're putting it to work.

Championing the Art of Diversity and Inclusion

Study after study has shown that supporting the arts, and that promoting diversity and inclusion, are great for business and for the civic life of a city -- not to mention being good for the soul and for the conscience.

To bolster both the arts and the rich diversity of our City, L.A. celebrates a whole series of Heritage Months, including Latino Heritage Month, American Indian Heritage Month, African American Heritage Month and Asian and Pacific Islander American Heritage Month -- and this month: LGBTQ Heritage Month. It features multiple exhibits, performances and much more -- 75 at last count!

To kick off the month, I joined with other leaders in City Hall to recognize and honor great LGBTQ role models -- notably in the performing and visual arts. I got to meet and introduce actor, playwright and author Michael Kearns. He was the first Hollywood actor to

come out as gay, in the mid-1970s, and the first to reveal that he was HIV-positive, in 1992 – making him a brave pioneer.

L.A.'s Department of Cultural Affairs has an incredible calendar of events – and an assemblage of some outstanding artworks online at <http://culturela.org> http://www.lacontroller.org/r?u=http%3A%2F%2Fculturela.org&utm_source=controllergalperin&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=0602newsletter&n=5 . And check out coverage of the month's kick-off here http://www.lacontroller.org/r?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.losangelesblade.com%2F2017%2F05%2F31%2Flos-angeles-city-hall-honors-lgbt-trailblazers-introduces-new-initiatives%2F&utm_source=controllergalperin&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=0602newsletter&n=6 .

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Addressing our City Council for LGBT Heritage Month.

Meetings and Greetings

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Left to right, top to bottom: At the Jews United for Democracy and Justice Summit at the Leo Baeck Temple; at the City Council with Councilmember Bob Blumenfield, City Attorney Mike Feuer and Mayor Eric Garcetti commemorating Jewish Heritage Month; and with Paul Castro, president and executive director of Jewish Family Service, at the 24th annual JFS Gala.

As always, I welcome your thoughts and feedback. Feel free to reply to this email, leave a comment on the website http://www.lacontroller.org/send-us-your-audit-ideas?utm_source=controllergalperin&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=0602newsletter&n=7 or on Facebook http://www.lacontroller.org/r?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FControllerRonGalperin&utm_source=controllergalperin&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=0602newsletter&n=8 .

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